

California Watershed Management Forums

1999-2000

Final Report

Watershed Management Council

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Contributing Co-Sponsors to Forums

California Resources Agency
Californians and the Land
East Bay Municipal Utility District
For the Sake of the Salmon
U.C. Davis – Public Service Research Program
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Forest Service – Region 5
Watershed Management Council

Location of Forums

University of California, Davis

*The Watershed Management Council is a nonprofit, educational organization dedicated
to advancing the art and science of watershed management.*

*For more information about this report, see the WMC website:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Improving watershed management across the state of California was the focus of a broad-based group of Californians who met together during four one-day forums between September 1999 and May 2000. Held at U.C. Davis, the forums invited diverse participants from the private and public sectors, and from all of the state's basins, to share ideas about opportunities and needs for a practical, collaborative, coordinated framework for watershed management in California – especially at the state and local levels.

Highlights of the California Watershed Management Forums included the following:

- ❖ People in a state as large and diverse as California can find commonality of ideas and principles for watershed management. A number of statements (64) were agreed upon as principles, state & local roles, accountability, and watershed definitions, such as:
 - ◆ Watershed management must integrate the needs and values of water quality, water quantity, flood plain management, ecosystems, and land use.
 - ◆ The State must think in terms of watershed boundaries instead of political ones to address its natural resource issues.
 - ◆ The Governor would provide the leadership to direct state agencies to coordinate at the state and local level.
 - ◆ The watershed approach works to build trust in order to develop solutions among all interests through a long-term process.
 - ◆ A state level framework should direct state assistance to local groups.
 - ◆ State staffs need to view local stakeholder-based watershed programs as being a significant factor in achieving their own agency goals.
- ❖ An initial outline for “a robust, collaborative” State framework for watershed management in California was developed by the participants and offered as a means for continued discussions.
 - ◆ Categories include: State Commitment, State Coordination, Agency Creativity, Staff Support, State Funding Support for Local Watershed Partners, and others.
- ❖ “12 Steps to Watershed Recovery”, a list of achievable steps to help accomplish a new State framework, was developed as a checklist for progress by the participants. The list's strength lies in the joint process in deriving the steps and in the joint (public/private) leadership and participation for carrying them out.
- ❖ California's Forum also served as a Regional Watershed Roundtable, along with 12 other regions in the nation. In June 2001, 25 selected delegates from the state will participate and share the Forum's results with the National Watershed Forum in Virginia.
- ❖ Participants intend to gather again in Spring 2001 to measure their progress on all of the above to help ensure success with California's watershed approach and its watershed partnerships

INTRODUCTION: Why the Forums Were Held

With 100 million acres and 34 million people, California took up the challenge of forming its own watershed “roundtable” dialogue. During 1999-2000, watershed management leaders, or “shedheads”, from around the state gathered for a series of four one-day forums, sponsored by the Watershed Management Council. State and federal agencies and a host of organizations involved with watershed restoration and other management efforts throughout California agreed that the time was ripe for a statewide dialogue.

Purpose of Forums

The purpose of the forums was to provide a neutral setting where ideas, opportunities, and needs for a practical framework for watershed management in California could be discussed. Initially, the focus was on state and local relationships as that role was sufficiently complex. Eventually, the federal role was added along with the “roundtable” function, as envisioned by the federal Clean Water Action Plan, when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provided a cooperative agreement to support the project. As a result, the products of the California Forums/ Roundtable will be shared along with the other regional watershed roundtables at the National Watershed Forum in Arlington, Virginia in June 2001.

Role of Watershed Management Council

Founded in 1986 in California, the Watershed Management Council is a nonprofit, educational organization dedicated to advancing the art and science of watershed management. Its primary activities include producing biannual conferences and periodic field tours, workshops, short courses, and technical newsletters. As a neutral, nonpolitical entity, the Council was in a unique position to initiate the forum concept and bring together the diverse interests in the state on the topic of watershed management.

Contributing Co-Sponsors

Various public and private organizations contributed financially as co-sponsors to make the forum series possible: California Resources Agency, Californians and the Land, East Bay Municipal Utility District, For the Sake of the Salmon, U.C. Davis – Public Service Research Program, U.S. EPA (with NOAA funding), and U.S. Forest Service (Region 5).

Planning Committee

The Forum Planning Committee consisted of several WMC Board members (Polly Hays, U.S. Forest Service; Dennis Pendleton, U.C. Davis; Rick Kattelmann, Sierra Nevada Aquatic Resource Lab.; and Sari Sommarstrom, WMC President); three state representatives (Maria Rea & Nina Gordon, California Resources Agency; Clay

Brandow, California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection); and two people from non-governmental organizations (Martha Davis, Californians and the Land; and Laurel Ames, Sierra Nevada Alliance). Forum dates, themes, speakers and formats were all discussed and decided upon by this group.

METHODS: Who Participated And How

Participation

Participation was solicited by invitation only and limited in number to ensure optimum discussion and exchange of perspectives. Invitees were targeted for each of the state's 10 major river basins, such as the Sacramento, North Coast, San Francisco Bay, and Los Angeles. A mailing list of 178 individuals was eventually developed. In all, 134 different people attended at least one of the four forums, all representatives of state agencies, state legislators, local government, local watershed groups, land and water managers, environmental groups, federal agencies, and universities (see attached list). Attendance at each of the four forums ranged from 45 to 77. Located near the state capital of Sacramento, the University of California campus at Davis served as the site of each forum.

Registration was free to all invited participants, including lunch and refreshments. For those representatives of local watershed groups traveling a long distance, travel expenses were partially reimbursed when requested. Costs per forum ranged from \$3,300 to \$9,200, with project management and most of the administrative time donated by WMC.

Meeting Process

Forum #1 “Identifying the Potential” (Sept. 1, 1999)

Objective: *Initiate discussion about state and local watershed management in California among a broad, diverse group of knowledgeable people from all of the State's basins and start envisioning the potential by first looking at other states' experiences.*

The dialogue began by first listening to out-of-state speakers from Massachusetts, Oregon and Washington who related their innovative state-local watershed programs and then to two experts providing regional and national perspectives. Questions of the speakers were many. The audience provided what ideas they thought were interesting, what might work in California, and what might not transfer to our state.

Forum #2 “Expectations of Governance” (Nov. 15, 1999)

Objective: *Explore the various expectations of state and local governance of watershed management programs, identify the common ideas and principles among diverse interests, and identify what changes need to be made to improve such governance.*

From the very energizing initial forum, the second forum explored the various in-state expectations of state and local governance of watershed management programs. Four panels of diverse speakers responded to specific questions related to accountability, governance structure and flexibility, incentives, and technical support. The broad representation on the panels brought depth to the discussions (and even some fun). Overviews of state watershed programs and local watershed groups were also presented.

Forum #3 “Shaping a Robust, Collaborative Framework” (Feb. 2, 2000)

Objective: *Identify the common ideas among diverse interests for state and local watershed approaches and suggest how a robust, collaborative framework for watershed management in California could be shaped.*

In the third forum, attendees were divided into four groups of diverse representation and rotated round-robin style among four sub-topic sessions on the main topic of shaping a “robust”, collaborative framework for watershed management in California. The sub-topics were: Watershed Principles; Definitions; Accountability and Governance; and Integration of Watershed Approaches. Everyone had the opportunity to speak within this format and also to get to know the group members better. It was felt that people really started to listen to each other in this forum.

Forum #4 “Filling In the Framework” (May 17, 2000)

Objective: *Develop the outline of a robust, collaborative framework for watershed management in California and identify achievable steps to accomplish such a framework.*

To formally bring in the federal roles, several federal partnership efforts were reviewed: the newly proposed “Unified Federal Policy on Watersheds”, and the “Working Across Boundaries Forum” (held in April in Lake County). In addition, a panel of representatives from four federal agencies – Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Land Management, National Resources Conservation Service, and the U.S. Forest Service – responded to a series of questions concerning their role in collaborative watershed efforts.

To help identify areas of agreement, a 10-page questionnaire synthesizing comments from the 55 pages of summaries of the first three forums had been prepared and sent out to the invitation list (173) ahead of time to rank the relative level of agreement. Respondents represented a wide range of opinion leaders. About one-third of the statements appeared to have a strong concurrence of opinion.

Results of this survey were presented and discussed with all of the participants. In addition, a handout listing “Some Framework Options” was used for discussing “filling in the framework”. Moving on with the areas of agreement, a “12 Steps to Watershed Recovery in California” list was drafted and fleshed out. Each step was assigned leaders from at least one agency and one organization to help follow through.

RESULTS: What the Outcomes Were

Products

The following products have come out of the Forums:

- ❑ A detailed summary (@ 12-18 pages) from each Forum of comments by speakers, panelists, and other participants. (See Appendix)
- ❑ Participation lists for each forum and a master list of all participants, including name, title, organization, address, phone, fax and e-mail. (See Appendix)
- ❑ A Questionnaire representing a synthesis of comments made from Forums #1-3, as well as a Summary of Opinion Results. (See Appendix)
- ❑ Evaluations of each forum and the forum series from written audience feedback
- ❑ An action list, “12 Steps to Watershed Recovery in California” (revised draft).

Evaluation & Feedback

Feedback forms were given to each participant at every forum. Return rates ranged from 12 to 50% per forum. Each forum’s value was rated on a scale (1 = low, 5= high) and then averaged, with the results as follows: #1 – 4.2; #2 – 4.1; #3 – 4.5; #4 - 3.9 .

The highlights of the four forums, individually or together, appeared to be:

- A very high level of conversation that was useful (Forum #1)
- A speaker who said he gained more knowledge than he imparted (#1)
- Setting the tone and direction – statewide programs do work, agencies can think in watershed terms (#1)
- Informative discussions which helped bring us closer to focusing on the relevance and importance of working cooperatively in watersheds (#2)
- Format helpful in getting lots of good discussion from everyone on the issues and their perspectives; “by staying together as a group all day, we learned each other’s issues and were able to build off that as the day progressed.” (#3)
- Finding significant areas of agreement among the participants (#3)
- Great networking opportunities during breaks and lunch (all)
- Coming away with new ideas that might be worth trying (all)
- Seeing new potential for state-local relationships in watershed management in California (all)

Here's some quotes from our feedback forms:

- *“I’ve been to 4 all-day meetings in the past four work days and I would choose this one as the single meeting if I only went to one – well done” (#3), (Mark Lancaster, Trinity County Planning Dept.)*
- *"I'm very, very pleased with the way the four forums in the series went together and the result." (Laurel Ames, Sierra Nevada Alliance)*
- *"The forums provided a greater understanding of the issues and good networking." (Janet Blake, No. Coast Regional Water Quality Control Bd.)*

- *"The best parts of the forums were hearing other's viewpoints, meeting new people, and the creative approach to each forum (enjoyable!)."* (Diane Gaumer, Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy)
- *"The '12 Steps to Recovery" list will really get us moving."* (Lynn Barris, Cherokee Watershed Group)

What didn't work well in the forums:

- Inadequate time for audience participation and dialogue in the first 2 forums
- Lack of private landowners (agriculture and timber) at most forums
- Lack of national environmental groups (e.g., Sierra Club, NRDC) at some
- Too few watershed coordinators at some
- Lack of continuity by agency management types
- Too many panelists and/or not enough time per topic (#2, #3, #4)
- Synthesis at interim steps
- Order of certain discussion topics: *"We should have started with what are the clear goals of watershed management and restoration, then we can talk about how to get there."* (Dorothy Green, Los Angeles /San Gabriel Watershed Council)
- Development of an effective framework to take home: *"The always difficult transition from discussion/ framing the issue to 'action' stands before this group."* (Rick Leong, East Bay Municipal Utility District)

Areas of Agreement & Disagreement

Results from the Questionnaire indicated that, of the 182 statements rated by the respondents, there was an apparent convergence of agreement on about one-third (64) of the statements (see Table 1), near agreement on another third (64), and no agreement on the balance (54). (See Appendix A for the complete list.)

Areas of highest agreement (i.e., greater number of agreed upon statements than disagreed) were:

- Statewide Principles: general criteria & examples for a management program
- Watershed Assessments: State and Local Roles
- Accountability Needs: State to Local
- State Role in Watershed Partnerships

Table 1 Statements with Apparent Convergence of Opinion or Agreement	
PRINCIPLES: Criteria & Comments about Statewide principles in general	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principles should apply to both rural and urban areas of the state. * Leadership is needed from state agency directors that watershed activities are important. * Statewide principles should focus on state's goals. A state-level framework should direct state assistance to local groups. Watershed terms must be clearly defined when used in a Principle statement. The purpose of Principles is to clearly and briefly describe the distinguishable ingredients, which comprise the character of the program. Ideally the Governor would provide the leadership to direct that state agencies to coordinate at the watershed level. The State must think in terms of watersheds instead of political boundaries to address its natural resource issues. 	
PRINCIPLES: Examples of Statewide Program Principles	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watershed management must integrate the needs and values of water quality, water quantity, flood plain management, ecosystems, and land use. Active partnership is promoted among all participants in watershed management. Watershed assessments need to be "neutral" (e.g., objective, not biased). The watershed approach attempts to build trust in order to develop solutions through a long-term process. Agencies must coordinate among themselves on a watershed basis. State commits to continuous improvement in coordination and communication vertically within agencies and horizontally between agencies and other entities in each watershed basin. 	
PRINCIPLES: Examples of Restoration Project & Plan Principles	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watershed function should be incorporated into all infrastructure design, planning, and implementation. Government should apply the same [or greater] watershed protection standards to its own projects that it applies to others. Restoration funding should not be distributed by political districts ("pork") but on the basis of watershed need. 	
WATERSHED DEFINITIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The goal of watershed management is "to have a comprehensive, coordinated approach to addressing issues which affect the function of the watershed area, including protection, restoration, and management." A watershed council is a generic term best defined as "a group involved in a process that combines: a) the watershed approach for managing natural resources; b) collaborative partnerships between public and private sectors; c) a composition of diverse interests and stakeholders; d) a local, community-based location. 	
LOCAL WATERSHED GROUP COMPOSITION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important that the watershed group have the potential to be effective in the local watershed. * 	
STATE ROLE: Capacity Building (e.g., Organizational Development) of Local Watershed Efforts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building should be about sustaining watershed management locally. Regional coordinators, to provide organizational training and supported by the state, would benefit local watershed coordinators and their groups in being more effective. The state should invest in building the capabilities of local watershed organizations and not just put funds into a pool to hire short-term watershed coordinators. Multi-year grants are needed to help with the organizational capacity of local watershed groups. 	
ACCOUNTABILITY NEEDS: STATE TO LOCAL	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State needs to establish an equitable and rational process to distribute proposition (bond) funds.* A point of contact within state agencies needs to be identified for each watershed. Performance requirements of state should clearly specify desired condition. State needs to commit to provide contract and payments to local groups in a timely manner. State needs more funding to administer their restoration grant programs well and efficiently. A streamlined restoration granting process should be a high priority of the state. 	
ACCOUNTABILITY NEEDS: LOCAL TO STATE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State should provide funding for longer term (5-10 years) post-project evaluation. Project effectiveness needs to be documented with credibility and commonality of technique. 	
STATE ROLE: Getting State Agencies to Buy-In to State-Local Watershed Partnerships	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State needs to survey its own programs and policies and then develop a program to coordinate these efforts. 	

- Getting the right type of person is critical for serving on these partnerships.
- Not enough state staff people (e.g., DFG, CDF) are available in local or regional offices to provide technical assistance to each local watershed group.
- Some watershed groups are presently being well assisted by state agency staff.
- Staff needs to view local watershed programs as being a significant factor in their achieving their own agency goals.
- To succeed at technical assistance, the state needs to have technical expertise built in as a purpose and a deliverable for that agency.
- Agencies will learn that the watershed approach of doing increased assessments, monitoring, and projects will actually expand the capacity of their agencies to get work done.
- Skills training should be provided for state staff involved in local watershed partnerships.

STATE ROLE: SETTING PRIORITIES

- Funds should not only go to priority watersheds.

STATE ROLE: CREATING INCENTIVES

- Incentive-based programs in the state should be assessed to evaluate their success. *
- Local groups do not have to take state incentive funding if they don't want to.
- More technical assistance is needed to help landowners with better watershed practices.
- We need the public to better appreciate the beauty of using watersheds as the way to fit many issues.
- We need to eliminate disincentives to local involvement and action.
- Agencies need to have incentives to integrate across missions and disciplines.
- We need to credit the people who have done a good job at stewardship.

STATE & LOCAL ROLES: WATERSHED ASSESSMENTS

- Participation in the assessment needs to be clearly defined. *
- Watershed assessments should be used to develop watershed action plans and monitoring strategies. *
- Local stakeholders and government together can: a) identify desired condition, b) identify types of data needed, c) compile a watershed view of the resources, d) use agency-developed monitoring programs to see if desired conditions are met.
- The state does not have to do the data collection for the data to be science-based.
- Watershed assessments should be the basis for a watershed restoration strategy.
- Assessment needs to be peer reviewed.
- Assessment needs to identify areas of missing information.
- Monitoring should be required as an element of a state-funded watershed assessment.
- More funds need to be available to prepare local watershed plans.

LOCAL ROLE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND WATERSHED RESTORATION GROUPS

- It is important for watershed groups to know what other groups are doing within their region and within the state.
- Local water and sewer districts should play an active role in local watershed groups.
- Local watershed groups should seek active partnerships with county government.
- Communication is important between local watershed groups and local government.

FEDERAL ROLE:

- Some federal agencies provide more flexibility in grant programs than state agencies
- Federal land managers (e.g., USFS, BLM) need to be members of local watershed groups where their property is located, just like the private landowner.
- Federal land management agencies can provide valuable technical assistance with local watershed groups.

* Showing strong agreement / concurrence (all 4's & 5's)

Areas of near or mixed agreement (i.e., most responses rated as near agreement, but few as disagreement) were:

- Statewide Principles for Restoration Projects and Plans
- State Role for Capacity Building of Local Watershed Efforts
- Accountability Needs: Local to State
- State Role for Creating Incentives
- Local Role for Local Government and Watershed Restoration Groups
- Federal Role with other Governments and Watershed Restoration Groups

Areas of lowest agreement (i.e., more disagreement than agreement) were:

- Watershed Definitions
- Local Watershed Group Composition
- State Role in Setting Priorities (for watersheds & projects)

The questionnaire's limitations were pointed out by several participants:

- It was difficult to respond to each statement without the context in which the statements were originally made;
- A few word changes could make a big difference in the respondent's answers;
- Some statements seemed too simplistic;
- Statements which appear to pit the state or federal levels against the local level appear to be "wrong-minded";
- Respondents may cite the same rating for completely different reasons; therefore, what looks like agreement may not be so at all;
- Certain issues were missing in the survey.

The intent was not for the survey to be used as a statistical tool but only as a broad gauge of the status of opinions. On the positive side, the survey was deemed a good summary of the comments up to that time and a useful tool to sort out the "random brainstorm ideas from the more universally accepted needs and beliefs". It was also sent out to the entire list of invitees, which allowed the opportunity to get very broad input.

Overall, the questionnaire results appeared to be fairly indicative of the extent of agreement on a lot of major issues. Forum #4 participants suggested focusing on the areas of agreement and seeing how we can move forward on these. However, as one person pointed out, the areas of disagreement are "dangerous to ignore" and may be more critical than the areas of agreement. Trying to resolve them in a short time will probably not be too successful. Some of the agreed upon ideas can be found reflected in the Framework Outline options (Table 2) and the "12 Steps to Watershed Recovery" (Table 3) described below.

State Framework Outline Draft

Forum #4's objective was to develop the outline of a "robust, collaborative framework for watershed management in California", based on the survey results and other sources. A framework can provide a context for actions that have occurred or could occur. An initial framework table, with 10 categories, many sub-categories, and several options for each, was presented to assist the forum's discussion on the theme of "filling in the framework". As a place to begin, the focus of the table was on the State's many roles.

Table 2 shows the table in outline format. The options listed after each sub-category are not mutually exclusive but offer a way to view some of the most obvious choices. As one participant described the outline, you can mix and match the pieces "like a Mr. Potato Head". Only the first five categories were discussed at the forum; hence greater detail is provided for this portion. Those options that seemed to resonate are highlighted (*), with the interesting dialogue found in Forum #4's Summary (see Appendix).

Table 2. Initial Outline of a State Framework for Watershed Management

(Category -- Sub-Category -- (Options)) (* Option favored in Forum #4)

I. State Commitment to Watersheds

- A. Level of Policy (Governor* / Statute */ Secretary *)
- B. Type (Priority* / Budgeted* / Unfunded)
- C. Area (Statewide* / Regional only)

II. State Program Coordination at the Watershed Level

- A. Agency Participation (Water Agencies Only / All Depts.* / CalEPA or RA
- B. Organizational Setting (Status Quo / New Agency / Reorganized Agencies)
- C. Physical Setting (Status Quo / Multi-agency Regional / Multi-agency Basin Offices)
- D. Resource Allocation / Funding Decisions (Status Quo / Senior Manager Roundtable / Regional Roundtables*/ Local Representatives*)
- E. Decision-making Scale (Central / Regional @10/ Sub-Regional @30)
- F. Agency Budgeting (Status Quo / CalEPA & RA dual budgets*)

III. Agency Creativity and Discretionary Authority to Support Watershed Approaches

- A. Flexible Funding Authority * (Status Quo/ Weighted Criteria / Expanded Eligibility / Venture Capital Model)
- B. Incentives for Voluntary Action (Legislative Mandates / Minimum strings* / No strings / Rewards*)
- C. Period of Grant Funding (Annual / Multi-Year* / Endowment*)
- D. Consistency of State Land Mgt. (Separate / Cooperative*)

IV. Agency Staff Support for Watershed Efforts

- A. Location (Status Quo / Basin / Interagency Seating by Basin/Watershed)
- B. Role (Technical Advisor */ Leadership* / Equal Partner*)
- C. Staff Training (Technical only / Organizational skills / Financial skills)
- D. Number (1 person per agency per watershed / 1 lead agency per watershed / State Teams per watershed / State-Federal Teams per region/basin*)
- E. Funding for Staff (for #D *)
- F. Project Permit Assistance (Active Coordination* / One-Stop Shop*/ Advisory)

V. State Funding Support for Local Watershed Partners

- A. Activities Funded (Projects / Assessments & Plans / Monitoring)
- B. Local Organizational Support (None / 1 year only / Multi-year)
- C. Recipient Qualifications (Any / RCDs / Exclusive / Inclusive groups)
- D. Delivery of Funding (Status Quo/ 6 months / 1 year)
- E. Accountability (Status Quo/ Performance Measures /)

VI. State Support for Research, Experimentation, and Pilot Projects**VII. State Provision of Technical Assistance and Analytical Support****VIII. State Support for Watershed Literacy Activities: Information and Education****IX. State-Local Coordination Roles****X. State Coordination with Federal Agency & Tribal Efforts**

One of the problems with this topic was that the discussions tended to be a comparison of apples and oranges. Some people were talking about the broader organizational needs of state agencies and their numerous horizontal (between agency) and vertical (within agency hierarchy) communications and components. Others, however, were only talking about a watershed restoration grant program and the “vertical” delivery of state/federal funding to local groups, such as the Department of Fish and Game’s Stream Restoration Grant Program or State Water Resource Control Board’s ‘319’ grants. We needed to be clearer about which part of the framework we were talking about, as a grant program is just one component (albeit an important one) of the broader statewide framework.

Additionally, connections need to be drawn between some of the categories and sub-categories. For example, State Commitment (I) is needed to enable Staff Support for Watershed Groups (IV) to work well. One of the categories, State Funding Support for Local Watershed Partners (V), is also the focus of study by the California Biodiversity Council’s Watershed Working Group which has released its “Recommendations for Best Funding Practices for Watershed Management”. Connecting the Areas of Agreement from Table 1 (as well as Areas of Near Agreement) with the Framework Outline of Table 2, possibly using the statements as principles, should be another future endeavor.

Federal Issues & Opinions

Issues related to the federal role in California’s watershed management are important for relaying to the National Watershed Forum as well as for addressing in the state’s own framework. While the state-local relationship was the focus of most of the forums, the need for a state/federal partnership to help achieve local efforts may more accurately reflect the relationship being sought. The following recommendations, made during several forums or by the federal panel in Forum #4, seemed to resonate among the participants:

- A. Restore the budget for the California office of NRCS, an agency that is being dismantled through federal budget cuts (50% less staff in state than 15 years ago). NRCS has technical expertise built in as a purpose and deliverable, unlike most other agencies. Ironically, its ability to perform is shrinking during a time of greater need.
- B. Have patience and persistence: persistence to make sure the federal and mixed ownership watersheds are improved, and patience to get the partners the federal agencies need. Be persistent about looking at the big picture.
- C. Develop and disseminate updated technical standards of information and practices (e.g., NRCS field office technical guides).
- D. Sustain federal programs of direct assistance, both technical and financial. Federal land management agencies can provide valuable technical assistance with local watershed groups.
- E. Continue long-term data gathering activities like USGS stream gages and the NRCS soil surveys. Do not use precious local dollars for such broad public benefit efforts. Make sure the state comes up with their needed matching dollars.
- F. Use local offices where federal agencies have a community presence (e.g., USFS, NRCS) to help get federal staff personally acquainted with local watershed needs.

- G. Use local partners to do a better job in data gathering on specific project areas and doing some long-term monitoring
- H. Get the federal government to remove legislative and administrative barriers to the service procurement process (e.g., cooperative agreements instead of low bid contracting)
- I. Package watershed-related proposals in federal agency budgets to better appeal to the administration and OMB priorities; appeal OMB decisions concerning critical budget proposals for watersheds and repackage if needed.
- J. Sustain those federal agency grant programs that provide more flexibility than state agencies (e.g., EPA Small Award Grants, USFS Challenge Cost-Share Grants).
- K. Have federal land managers (e.g., USFS, BLM) as members of local watershed groups where their property is located, just like with private landowners.

Federal watershed partnership successes identified by the panelists were:

- Upper Stony Creek Project (Glenn/Colusa Counties)
- Lower Clear Creek Watershed Restoration Program (near Redding)
- Grass Valley Creek Watershed (Trinity County)
- Upper Putah Creek Watershed (near Davis)
- Elkhorn Slough Watershed Project (near Monterey)
- Santa Margarita Watershed Cleanup (San Diego/Riverside Counties)

12 Steps to Watershed Recovery

To identify achievable steps to accomplish a new framework, a list of “12 Steps on the Path to Watershed Recovery for California” evolved in the last forum from all of the preceding efforts (see Table 3). Getting from the present to some desired future was obviously going to take more than a few steps, and breaking this ambitious effort into 12 smaller steps seemed to be more readily achievable. Any analogy to other 12 step recovery programs is intentional. The list’s strength lies in the joint process in deriving the steps and in the joint leadership and participation identified for carrying them out.

The steps are intended to be short, clear, and have responsibilities assigned as a means of implementation. At least two co-leaders were identified for each step, ideally with a balance of agency and non-agency representatives (and also a state/local balance). An initial intent is for each step to be fleshed out by the leaders into many sub-steps, adding new players where needed, and making these steps fairly doable in the short-term (1-2 years). None of the “burden” of carrying them out is placed on any one entity. These 12 steps are not necessarily sequential but can move at the same time at different paces.

More time would have been helpful to refine each of the steps during Forum #4 and to develop a broader consensus. Hopefully, all will be able to report back in May 2001 on the progress of each of the “12 Steps to Watershed Recovery” and revise them as needed.

Table 3

12 Steps to Watershed Recovery in California

December 2000

1. Form a statewide coalition/network of local watershed groups.

Create a statewide umbrella organization or coalition of local watershed groups for the purposes of communication, constituency building, informational sharing, and improving their capacity for organizational effectiveness.

Leaders: Laurel Ames, Sierra Nevada Alliance; Lynn Barris, Cherokee Watershed; Allen Harthorn, Sacramento River Watershed Program; Connor Everts, Southern California Watershed Alliance

2. Seek endorsement by Governor Davis for the State's commitment to the watershed approach.

An Executive Order to address the statewide value of the watershed approach would be one means.

Leaders: Mary Ellen Dick, City of San Jose; Sunnoma Madrone, Redwood Community Action Agency; Bob Meacher/Rob Shulman, RCRC; Martha Davis, Inland Empire Utilities District

3. Support collaborative watershed groups that are community-based.

- Obtain State commitment for assistance with the start-up and continuation of collaborative watershed groups;
- Advocate funding for the operation and capacity-building of such groups;
- Advance the levels of state and federal technical support for such groups.

Leaders: CA Watershed Network / CA-CRMP/ For Sake of Salmon; Resources Agency/ CalEPA

4. Obtain Legislative endorsement of the State's commitments.

Through one or more bills, seek necessary authority and funding to carry out the state's role in its watershed management commitments, including #3 above.

Leaders: Connor Everts, So. Cal. Watershed Alliance; Mike Wellborn, Orange Co.; Laurel Ames, Sierra Nevada Alliance; RCRC; CSAC

5. Coordinate Agency watershed work officially through formal agreements.

Develop and obtain MOUs for Watershed Management that clearly states their commitments to cooperative watershed management in California:

- among departments within the Resources Agency & CalEPA
- among the State's cabinet-level agencies
- between the State and the Federal resource agencies
- between the State and Local governments
- between the State and watershed groups

Leaders: Tom Wehri, CARCD; Lisa H. McCann, Central Coast RWQCB; Mike Wellborn, Orange Co.; Clay Brandow, CDF

6. Prepare State watershed handbooks and guidelines.

Develop State manuals to help provide consistency and clear expectations to watershed groups, managers, and restoration practitioners about recommended

methods for: watershed assessments, water quality and habitat monitoring, data reporting, and watershed plans.

Leaders: Russ Henley, CDF; Fraser Shilling, UCD; Rick Kattelman, WMC; Kallie Kull, Fisheries Network of the Central Calif. Coastal Counties (FishNet4C)

7. Share state-of-the-art watershed restoration methods & effectiveness.

- a. Hold an annual statewide watershed restoration conference, with a published proceedings to record the products of the event, as well as regional events.
- b. Expand use of field tours throughout the State's basins.
- c. Develop website sharing of restoration information.
- d. Develop a central listserve for announcements.

Leaders: Watershed Management Council, Salmonid Restoration Federation, CA-CRMP; For the Sake of the Salmon

8. Create pathways for education, communication and outreach about watersheds.

Develop a coordinated approach for improving awareness and understanding of watersheds and for improving involvement in watershed activities. Pursue the proposed Watershed Signing Program.

Leaders: David Gottlieb, RCD of the Santa Monica Mountains; Allen Harthorn, Sacramento River Watershed Program; Mark Hite, CDF; Jacqueline Dingfelder, For the Sake of the Salmon

9. Establish State Scientific Peer Review Team(s) for watershed management.

Ensure that credible science in watershed management is recognized by the State and included as advisory within state agency grant processes through integrated review and advice by independent team(s) of scientists using an interdisciplinary approach.

Leaders: Cathy Bleier, Resources Agency; Russ Henly, CDF; Rick Kattelman, WMC; Dennis Heiman, Central Valley RWQCB; Ann Riley, Waterways Restoration Institute

10. Promote effective watershed monitoring and project evaluation programs.

Focus on the Big Picture of what is needed for local watershed monitoring and project evaluation and what is needed to help local groups.

Leaders: Ken Coulter, SWRCB; Marty Gingras, CDFG; Donna Meyer, City of Santa Cruz; Rick Kattelman, WMC

11. Develop an effective funding delivery system for grant recipients.

Address the ongoing need for a user-friendly grant process for recipients of state and federal restoration grants that also meets accountability standards of the grantors.

Leaders: Kristin Cooper-Carter, CSU Chico; Ann Riley, Waterways Restoration Institute; Dennis Heiman, Central Valley RWQCB

12. Identify a package of new incentives that need to be developed, and existing disincentives that need to be removed, in order to improve watershed management.

Develop a list of conservation incentives in California – what is and isn't working - as well as new ideas and solutions for better individual, business, and governmental involvement watershed management.

Leaders: Sungnome Madrone, Redwood Community Action Agency; Jacqueline Dingfelder, For Sake of the Salmon; Mark Lancaster, Trinity County; Dennis Heiman, Central Valley RWQCB; Pam Giacomini, Farm Bureau

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Meeting everyone's expectations for the four forums was an exceptional challenge that appeared to be partially satisfied. The California Watershed Management Forums did succeed in initiating lively and serious discussion about state and local watershed management among a broad, diverse group of knowledgeable people from all of the State's basins – something that had not been done before. This objective of the first forum was the most obtainable; succeeding objectives became increasingly ambitious.

Participant feedback indicated a strong feeling that the forums were of benefit to them - primarily through providing good networking, shared viewpoints, broadened discussion, new ideas, and thought-provoking discussion. All felt that their concerns were listened to. A majority answered that the beginnings of a “robust, collaborative framework” had been developed (“robust is optimistic – vibrant maybe”) and that we succeeded in identifying achievable steps in the 12 Steps list (“great wrap-up and charter for the future”...“but there's a lot of work to be done”). In addition, the State representatives have been mentioning the forums in their discussions and are looking forward to seeing its conclusions – particularly a common set of principles, working definitions, or agenda.

Certain expectations have also met with frustration. Some people wanted more sharing of success stories and a faster focus on the key issues. A few expected a finished product with specific language for a state program. Despite concerted efforts, several stakeholder interests did not participate very fully. While considerable watershed restoration funding was generated by voter approval of Propositions 12 and 13 in the March 2000 election, attempts to describe a watershed management approach through state legislation this session did not find sufficient support among certain critical players. The statewide watershed approach has yet to be publicly or explicitly endorsed by the Governor, though certain related bills were signed and budget measures were supported.

Some progress has already been made on a few of the 12 steps. The leaders of Step #1 – “Form a statewide coalition/network of local watershed groups” have already met several times and are in the process of outlining this new organization's proposed structure. As a major focus of the California Biodiversity Council's Watershed Working Group's efforts, ‘Best Funding Practice’ recommendations were proposed and accepted by the Council at its September meeting – definite progress towards Step #11: “Develop an effective funding delivery system for grant recipients.”

Lessons Learned

- People in a state as large and diverse as California can find commonality of ideas and principles for watershed management.
- Tackling state-local relationships was complex enough for the forums and more time was needed in another forum / roundtable setting to adequately address the federal

watershed management role, which is becoming increasingly complicated with new listings of endangered species and new TMDL requirements.

- Participants need to have a product to show for their involvement and a mutually comfortable strategy for them to continue to work together on.
- Participants need a “free lunch” time together as a valuable incentive and opportunity for diverse interests to communicate informally and to network in new ways.
- Translating new concepts that everyone agrees on into state action is a significant challenge. Concerns over how collaborative watershed efforts may affect private property rights and the legal responsibilities of agencies continue to linger & hamper such action.

Recommendations for State & Local Audiences

- ✓ Review the Opinion Results from the questionnaire responses (Table 1 and Appendix A), and discuss and revise the statements in order to come to a greater number of agreements. Conduct further polling to assess even broader viewpoints.
- ✓ Focus on the Initial Framework Outline (Table 2) to aid with further discussions on a state-local framework among small groups. Offer more sub-categories, details and options, where needed. Incorporate the statements from the Areas of Agreement (see above), such as for use as guiding principles. Seek consensus in small groups first and then in larger, more diverse groups.
- ✓ Actively pursue the “12 Steps to Watershed Recovery” (Table 3) and achieve significant progress by May 2001. Leaders should seek broader participation and commitment in providing more detail about specific tasks.
- ✓ Seek to involve more interests, especially those who were not very active in the four forums: private landowner groups, national environmental groups in the state, watershed coordinators, and local water districts. Concerns about the rights of private landowners and mandates of local agencies should be discussed and addressed.
- ✓ Come back together for a Forum in May or June 2001 to review the progress on all of the above. Identify the remaining needs. Revise the “12 Steps” as needed.
- ✓ Celebrate the successes!

Recommendations to National Watershed Forum

To help improve the role of federal agencies in California’s watershed management, the following recommendations are made:

- Restore the budget for the California office of NRCS, an agency which is being dismantled through federal budget cuts, ironically, during a time of great need.
- Develop and disseminate updated technical standards of information and practices (e.g., NRCS field office technical guides).
- Sustain federal programs of direct assistance, both technical and financial.
- Continue long-term federal data gathering activities like USGS stream gages and the NRCS soil surveys. Do not require precious local dollars for such broad public benefit efforts.
- Use local offices where federal agencies have a community presence (e.g., USFS, NRCS) to help get federal staff personally acquainted with local watershed needs.
- Use local partners in data gathering on specific project areas and doing some long-term monitoring where they can likely do a better job than non-local agencies.
- Remove federal legislative and administrative barriers to the service procurement process (e.g., cooperative agreements instead of low bid contracting).
- Package watershed-related proposals in federal agency budgets to better appeal to administration and OMB priorities; appeal OMB decisions concerning critical budget proposals for watersheds and repackage if needed.
- Include federal land managers as members of local watershed groups where their property is located, just like the private landowner.

What's Next

- ❑ Make Final Report available on the Watershed Management Council's website ([//watershed.org](http://watershed.org)). Spread the word of its availability and conclusions through newsletters, e-mail, presentations, and other means.
- ❑ Report back in May or June 2001 on the progress of the above items. Review each of the "12 Steps to Watershed Recovery" and revise as needed.
- ❑ Ensure that California's participation in the National Watershed Forum (June 2001 in Arlington, Virginia) is reflective of the diversity and findings of these California Watershed Management Forums, which also served as California's Regional Watershed Roundtable.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE CALIFORNIA WATERSHED FORUMS

State of California

Resources Agency - Secretary Mary Nichols, Asst. Secretary Maria Rea, Cathy Bleier, Nina Gordon
 Cal/EPA - Special Asst. to the Secretary William Vance
 Coastal Commission – Jack Gregg
 Coastal Conservancy -Karyn Gear
 Conservation Corps (CCC) – Patrick Couch, Julie Cobbs
 Dept. of Fish and Game (DFG) - Dean Marston, Michael Bird
 Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) - Director Andrea Tuttle, Mark Hite, Clay Brandow, Russ Henley, John Munn
 Dept. of Health Services – Leah Walker
 Dept. of Transportation (CalTrans) - Brian Smith, Steve Borroum
 Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) - Andy Lee, Steve Cowdin, Sara Denzler, Maria Lee, Fraser Sime
 Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) - Jose Angel, Shirley Birosik, Janet Blake, Angela Carpenter, Val Connor, Dennis Heiman, Linda Spencer, Dennis Westcot, Cindy Wise
 State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) – Art Baggett, Mary Jane Forster, Stan Martinson, John Ladd, Ken Coulter, Stephen Fagundes, Stefan Lorenzato
 State Legislature – Bob Franzosa (Senate Appropriations Comm.), Anna Ferrara (Senate Energy, Utilities & Communications Comm.)

Local Government

City of San Jose - Mary Ellen Dick , Debra Caldon
 Fishery Network of the Central California Coastal Counties - Kallie Kull
 Five County Salmon Conservation Planning Process - Mark Lancaster
 Humboldt County Dept. of Public Works - Don Tuttle
 Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Works – Vic Bapna
 Modoc County - Supervisor Nancy Huffman
 Orange County - Michael Wellborn
 Plumas County – Robert Shulman, Supervisor Bob Meacher
 Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC) - Michael Jackson
 Tehama County – Supervisor Charles Willard
 Ventura County Flood Control District – Alex Sheydayi

Local Watershed Groups

Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy - Allen Harthorn (later Sacramento R. Watershed Program)
 California CRMP Council - Catriona Black
 Cache Creek Stakeholders Group – Mary Lee Knecht
 Coastal Watershed Council - Donna Meyers
 Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy - Diane Gaumer
 Feather River CRM - Leah Wills
 Garcia River Watershed Advisory Group - Craig Bell
 Los Angeles / San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council - Dorothy Green
 Malibu Creek Watershed - David Gottlieb
 Pacific Coast Restoration - Mitch Farro
 Panoche/ Silver Creek CRMP - Nettie Drake
 Placer County RCD - Richard Gresham
 RCD of the Santa Monica Mountains - David Gottlieb
 Redwood Community Action Agency – Sungnome Madrone
 Sacramento River Watershed Program - Dennis Bowker
 San Francisco Creek CRMP - Pat Showalter
 San Luis Rey Watershed Council / Mission-Upper San Luis Rey RCD - Judith Mitchell
 Santa Cruz County RCD - Rich Casale (NRCS)
 Sotoyome-Santa Rosa RCD - Laurel Marcus

Southern California Watershed Alliance – Connor Everts
 Scott River Watershed CRMP Council - Jennifer Marx-Davis
 Truckee River Habitat Restoration Group - Kathleen Eagan
 Yuba Watershed Council – Shawn Garvey, Kerri Timmer

Land Managers

California Association of Flood Control Agencies - Alex Sheydayi
 California Association of Resource Conservation Districts - Tom Wehri
 California Farm Bureau Federation - Pam Giacomini, Gary Sack, Carre Brown
 California Forestry Association – Mark Rentz
 Forest Landowners Association - Allen Edwards
 Floodplain Management Association - Laura Hromadka

Water or Hydropower Managers

Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) - Dave Bolland, Sarge Green
 Bay Area Watershed Management Group - Ed Stewart
 Calaveras County Water District – James Cornelius
 Contra Costa Water District - Bob Nuzum
 East Bay Municipal Utility District - Rick Leong
 Northern California Water Assoc. – Anjanette Martin
 Placer County Water District - Otis Wollan

Environmental Advocates

Cherokee Watershed Group – Lynn Barris
 Environment Now – Kristina Haddad
 Environmental Defense Fund – David Yardas
 Friends of the River - Betsy Reifsnider
 Urban Creeks Council / Waterways Restoration Institute - Ann Riley

Public Interest

Californians and the Land – Martha Davis
 For the Sake of the Salmon – Jacqueline Dingfelder
 Sierra Nevada Alliance - Laurel Ames, Phil Chang, Stan Weidert
 Trust for Public Land – Elise Holland
 Watershed Management Council – Sari Sommarstrom, Rick Kattelman, Terry Henry

Academia

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 University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) - Stephanie Larson, Gary Nakamura
 University of California (UC) - Jeffrey Mount, Paul Sabatier, Dennis Pendleton, Jim Quinn, Renee Hoyos,
 Bill Leach, Fraser Shilling (UCD); Michael McGinnis (UCSB)

Regional Partnership Groups

California Biodiversity Council, Watershed Work Group - Mark Hite (also CDF)
 CAL/FED Bay-Delta Watershed Work Group- John Lowrie, Martha Davis, Bob Meacher

Federal Agencies

Army Corps of Engineers – Teresa Pacheco
 Bureau of Land Management - Carl Rountree, Karl Stein
 Environmental Protection Agency - Sam Ziegler
 Natural Resource Conservation Service-Diane Holcomb, Bill Cunningham, J.R. Flores, Walt Sikes
 U.S. Forest Service - Laurie Fenwood, Julie Tupper, Karen Barnette (now BLM)